

OPENING WORDS
Cory Labanow
Sunday, January 7, 2018

Good morning. My name is Cory Labanow. Twelve years and one week ago, I moved to New York City. Twelve years and zero weeks ago, I came to All Souls for the first time.

New York is forever asking me, “Are you sure you want to live here?” Humid subway platforms in the summer, slip ‘n slide sidewalks in the winter, high housing costs. Yet in return the City provides an unparalleled bounty of whatever-thing-you’re-into. There’s a wonderful *stickiness* to this place. Now, for the record, seven months ago I moved to Jersey City—which I have personally dubbed “the sixth borough”.

A significant part of that bounty for me is All Souls. I knew nobody when I first came, but Galen grabbed me--metaphorically. Galen granted me the freedom to not turn my brain off in church. And for 12 years, his sermons, his commitment to our congregation, and his enthusiastic support for the young adults group during my time there—well, Galen is a sticky guy.

New Year’s is a time for reflection. As I reflected on 2017, I thought of the parties where I laughed until my sides hurt, the one-on-one’s where I unburdened my heart, or the stimulating conversations that re-landscaped my mind. Who was there? Folks from All Souls. From the bottom of my heart, thanks for your stickiness, too. You are well worth the commute from the sixth borough.

And now, please stand as you are willing and able and join me in repeating our Bond of Union, which is printed in your Order of Service.